

3.1. Political opponents, including perceived political opponents

3.1. Political opponents, including perceived political opponents

3.1.1. Political opponents and activists

In the February 2025 report, Freedom House noted that opposition politicians and activists were frequently subjected to fabricated criminal charges and ‘other forms of harassment’ aimed at preventing their involvement in the political process.^{[293](#)} In mid-October 2025, Novaya Gazeta Europe reported that opposition politicians face increasing reprisals, with political scientist Margarita Zavadskaya linking this pressure to Russia’s parliamentary elections, due by September 2026.^{[294](#)}

Illustrative cases of criminal prosecution of political opponents and high-profile political activists include the following cases. In May 2025, a Moscow court sentenced Grigory Melkonyants,^{[295](#)} co-founder and co-chair of the independent Russian election monitoring group Golos, to five years in a penal colony^{[296](#)} on charges of organisation of activities of an ‘undesirable organisation,’ stemming from his alleged cooperation with the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO), which was declared ‘undesirable’ in 2021.^{[297](#)} Russian authorities designated Golos as a ‘foreign agent’ in 2023. Grigory Melkonyants has been in custody since his arrest in August 2023.^{[298](#)}

On 10 June 2025, Lev Shlosberg, deputy chair of the opposition Yabloko party, was put under house arrest on criminal charges of discrediting the Russian army,^{[299](#)} facing a prison sentence of up to five years.^{[300](#)} Prior to his arrest, law enforcement officers searched his home and the Yabloko office in Pskov.^{[301](#)} Lev Shlosberg was designated a ‘foreign agent’ in June 2023 and is also facing criminal charges for evading obligations of a ‘foreign agent’,^{[302](#)} which carries a possible sentence of up to two years in prison.^{[303](#)}

On 8 July 2025, the FSB opened a criminal case in absentia^{[304](#)} on treason charges against Pavel Andreev, ^{[305](#)} one of the founders of the Revolt-Center, the independent cultural centre in Syktyvkar, the capital of the Komi Republic.^{[306](#)} Andreev had also previously worked with the Komi Memorial Rights Commission^{[307](#)} and was an executive director of online news outlet 7 x 7.^{[308](#)} The next day, security forces carried out searches at the Revolt Centre^{[309](#)} and detained its executive director Daria Chernysheva^{[310](#)} for one day for failing to comply with the obligations of a ‘foreign agent’.^{[311](#)} Authorities also conducted home searches and interrogations of a human rights activist in Irkutsk, two prisoners’ rights activists in Yoshkar-Ola, the capital of Mari El Republic, and a Yabloko party member in Veliky Novgorod. However, as reported by Meduza, it remained unclear whether all of these searches and interrogations were conducted in connection with the Revolt Centre.^{[312](#)}

On 2 October 2025, the deputy chairman of Yabloko, Maxim Kruglov, was detained and charged with spreading ‘false’ information about the Russian army, facing from 5 to 10 years in prison.^{[313](#)} The charges reportedly stemmed from his Telegram posts, made back in 2022: one about the killing of civilians in Bucha in March 2022 and another one on UN data on casualties in Mariupol.^{[314](#)} On 10 October 2025, a Moscow court ordered the confiscation of his assets. According to his lawyer, who appealed the decision, this ruling

‘was not a common practice’, given that he does not have any ‘exorbitant’ income.[315](#)

[293](#)

Freedom House, Freedom in the World, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

[294](#)

Novaya Gazeta Europe, Tightening the screws. Why the Russian authorities are increasingly cracking down on opposition both at home and abroad, 17 October 2025, [url](#)

[295](#)

RFE/RL, Russian Court Sentences Prominent Election Watchdog To 5 Years In Prison, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

[296](#)

OSCE, Conviction of independent election monitor in Russia undermines human rights and democratic standards, OSCE human rights office says, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

[297](#)

AI, Russia: Sentencing of election observer Grigory Melkonyants a brazen attack on peaceful activism, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

[298](#)

RFE/RL, Russian Court Sentences Prominent Election Watchdog To 5 Years In Prison, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

[299](#)

Yabloko, Lev Shlosberg has been placed under house arrest as part of a criminal case concerning “repeated discrediting of the army”, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

[300](#)

Reuters, Russian politician faces criminal charge for condemning Ukraine, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

[301](#)

Reuters, Russian politician faces criminal charge for condemning Ukraine, 10 June 2025, [url](#); Yabloko, Lev Shlosberg has been placed under house arrest as part of a criminal case concerning “repeated discrediting of the army”, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

[302](#)

Rights in Russia, Write to Russia: Lev Shlosberg – placed under house arrest on charges of discrediting the Russian army and failing to abide by Russia’s ‘foreign agent’ law, 22 July 2025, [url](#)

[303](#)

Moscow Times (The), Shlosberg Placed Under House Arrest Pending Trial, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

[304](#)

Meduza, 'Politically motivated and contrary to common sense'. Journalists and activists across Russia face raids and interrogations after FSB charges ex-media manager Pavel Andreev with treason, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

[305](#)

Barents Observer (The), FSB opens treason case against Pavel Andreev, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

[306](#)

Obschestvo Memorial, Telegram, 8 July 2025, [url](#); Meduza, 'Politically motivated and contrary to common sense'. Journalists and activists across Russia face raids and interrogations after FSB charges ex-media manager Pavel Andreev with treason, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

[307](#)

Barents Observer (The), FSB opens treason case against Pavel Andreev, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

[308](#)

Barents Observer (The), FSB opens treason case against Pavel Andreev, 8 July 2025, [url](#); Meduza, 'Politically motivated and contrary to common sense'. Journalists and activists across Russia face raids and interrogations after FSB charges ex-media manager Pavel Andreev with treason, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

[309](#)

Obschestvo Memorial, Telegram, 8 July 2025, [url](#); Meduza, 'Politically motivated and contrary to common sense'. Journalists and activists across Russia face raids and interrogations after FSB charges ex-media manager Pavel Andreev with treason, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

[310](#)

CPI, Russia's repression record, 28 August 2025, [url](#)

[311](#)

Meduza, 'Politically motivated and contrary to common sense'. Journalists and activists across Russia face raids and interrogations after FSB charges ex-media manager Pavel Andreev with treason, 9 July 2025, [url](#); Barents Observer (The), Director of cultural Revolt Centre Daira Chernysheva detained in Syktyvkar, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

[312](#)

Meduza, ‘Politically motivated and contrary to common sense’. Journalists and activists across Russia face raids and interrogations after FSB charges ex-media manager Pavel Andreev with treason, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

[313](#)

Moscow Times (The), Russia Arrests Yabloko Deputy Head Over ‘Army Fakes’, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

[314](#)

Reuters, Russian politician who called for Ukraine ceasefire is charged with telling lies about the army, 2 October 2025, [url](#); Novaya Gazeta Europe, «????? ?????????????? ??????, ??? ??? ????-?? ??????» [“They put people in prison solely because they need to imprison someone], 2 October 2025, [url](#)

[315](#)

Moscow Times (The), Moscow Court Orders Seizure of Yabloko Deputy Head’s Assets Pending ‘Army Fakes’ Trial, 10 October 2025, [url](#)

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu